

Wicked Weather:

If all your troubles are melting away watch out for the floods

31262: Introduction to Computer Game Design

Design Project 1: Card Game
*Game Components, Attractiveness,
Game Design Diary, Evaluation and
Reflection*

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Group  Inc.

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Game Components

Objects

- Inventory Deck [72 cards]
 - 4 Pool Party
 - 4 Hide in Freezer
 - 4 Holiday in Winter Wonderland
 - 4 Water fights
 - 4 Ice Cream
 - 4 Slip, Slop. Slap
 - 4 Shade
 - 4 Sun Baking
 - 4 Umbrella
 - 4 Trench coats
 - 4 Shelter
 - 4 Heater
 - 4 Thermal Underwear
 - 4 Grandma's Sweater
 - 4 Holiday on Tropical Island
 - 4 Hot Chocolate
 - 2 Spanner
 - 2 Weather Machine
 - 2 Switcheroo's
 - 2 Bully
- Event Deck [14 cards]
 - 4 Snowy
 - 4 Rain
 - 4 Hot
 - 4 Blistering
 - 2 Disaster
- A double sided Game Manual

Playing Guide

1. Shuffle Inventory and Event Deck cards
2. Deal 7 cards to each player from the Inventory deck
3. Place the first card of the Event deck facing up, into the Event stack centred for all players to see.
4. Each round the player plays a card from their Inventory hand that protects them from the displayed even; starting with the player to the immediate left of the dealer.
5. If the player does not have a card that protects against the Event, they must discard one of their cards into the Inventory stack. Otherwise the player can draw a card from the Inventory deck only if they play a card that protects them from the event.
6. When all players have played the round another event card is drawn from the event deck.
7. The game continues until only one player is holding playing card(s) or the player with the most cards at the end of the Event deck wins the game.

Specific Rules

These cards can be played instead of protecting against the Event (cards are part of the Inventory deck):-

- **Spanner:** the next player of the round following the spanner card is played has to play two rounds against the event. If the effected can play cards to protect against the event twice, they may draw replacement Inventory cards as usual.
- **Weather Control Machine:** the player chooses an Event card (excluding Disaster), for two rounds (the remainder of the round and the round after). Play then continues with the chosen event. The Weather Control Machine player draws a card from the inventory deck for the round weather machine is played. After the end of the second round an event card is then drawn to continue play.
- **Switcheroo:** the player chooses one random card from any of the opponents hand OR may take the card that was most recently played from the inventory stack. If an opponent cards are chosen, the opponent loses the card.
- **Bully:** the player chooses one card from any of the opponents, after the opponent shows their hand to the player. Only the opponent chosen needs to show their cards to the player. The player does not draw a playing card for the round because they discard their Bully card for an opponent's card.

Attractiveness

The attractiveness of “*Wicked Weather: If all your troubles are melting away watch out for the floods*” is due to the focus of the designers upon the satirical premise of the game. The premise of “Wicked Weather” is to satirize the irrationality of the weather and the deterioration of traditional weather seasons as a result of global warming. The satire is achieved through the use of humorous images, and hilarious quotes related to the players hand of “Inventory” cards.

As well as featuring a great premise, there is quality game play refined after constant play-testing and re-iteration. The game was heavily influenced by successful games like “Go Fish”, “Memory” and “Uno”, and as such the game play is extremely simple and accessible to all ages. As the game only requires the player to strategically match their cards with a single card each round and survive to be the last player standing.

Overall “Wicked Weather” aims to be a commercial product through quality game play and a great overall premise. The game as well as being fun is educational through its “Global Warming” context and perspectives upon the issues impact upon society. Furthermore the sight of seeing players laughing and smiling while playing “Wicked Weather”, would be more than enough for other players to be intrigued and start recommending the game to their friends.

Game Design Diary

9/3/09

GROUP INSTANT MESSENGER MEETING

9:30PM – 10:00PM “Brainstorming Ideas” Andrew Chan, Greg Loudon, Peter McIntosh & Tim Pettit

“Earth is at the point where without sufficient environmentalism the different continents of the world will become environmental wastelands within 10 years. However in order to attain a good quality of life the continents must level their global warming with their environmentalism within these 10 years”

Players take the role of five different continents (North America, South America, Africa, Euro-Asia and Oceania) and must attempt to level their pollution through sustainable development, renewable resources and environmentalism.

Starting a Game

Each player is dealt 5 cards from a shuffled deck containing a random mixture of environmental, pollution and neutral cards reflecting their environmental position. The environmental cards create a negative number up to -10, pollution cards +10 and neutral cards having a 0 number.

COWS	The AI Gore Truth Card	Supporting Non Government Organizations
[POLLUTION]	[NEUTRAL]	[ENVIRONMENTAL]
+2	0	-2

Physical Prototype of Playing Cards

Turns

After the player has drawn their cards, they must add up their values to understand their environmental level. The aim is to achieve a score of 0 after 10 years (turns). Each turn each player has to switch one of their cards with a drawn card from the remaining card deck. However if a card is switched by the player, they must present their switched card to the other players and leave it face up in front of them.

End Game

By the end of the last players turn on the 10th year, each player has the final opportunity to choose one of the cards from one other players trading pile. Players then reveal their cards and the winner is the player closest to 0.

Kyoto Title Captured

During the “Brainstorm Session” the title for the groups’ “Global Warming” themed card game was thought of. The name “Kyoto” was chosen due to the Japanese cities relation to the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, a United Nations protocol created to encourage global ecological and biological integrity. A logo was also thought of containing the title above an outlined healthy tree and an unhealthy tree as a mirror image.

Influences

Furthermore the influences of the game were considered, ranging from the card games of “Corsair”, “Poker”, “Solitaire” and “Vigilante”. Each game was extremely influential to the game, and as such has been recorded during the development process of the newly defined “Kyoto”. Overall the game uses the core game mechanic of “Race to the End” and “Survival / Destruction”.

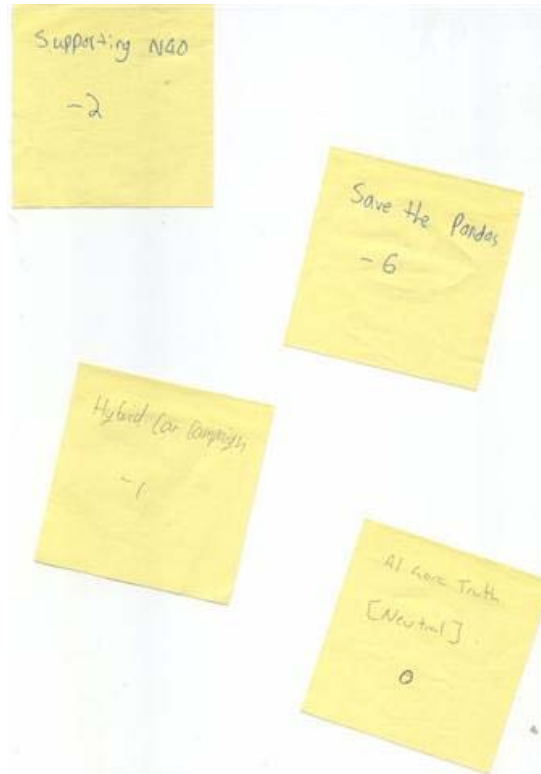
12/3/09

TUTORIAL PLAYTEST

4:30PM – 6:00PM “Kyoto Playtest” Andrew Chan and Greg Loudon
Wing Ying Huang and Yuang Wen
(Play-Testers)

Play-Test

During the “Introduction to Game Design tutorial, a play test of “Kyoto” was completed. Using a series of post-it notes the “Pollution”, “Neutral” and “Environmental” cards were drawn. The play testers of the session were Wing Ying Huang and Yuang Wen, and the “Game Design Workshop: A Play centric Approach to Creating Innovative Games” by Tracy Fullerton (Page 264) questionnaire was used. Overall the play test revealed a lot about “Kyoto” and issues of the game design.



Post-it Notes used during Play-Test

Both play testers mentioned that there was “*no sense of competition*” and it “*felt like they were playing on their own*” not with others. The first two recommendations from the testers illustrated that the game was not a multi-player game but rather it was a single player game. The testing also revealed a range of other issues including:

- **Mid Game Dissatisfaction**
- **No Satisfaction in Winning**
- **No Recommendation to Friends**
- **“Game play Sucks”**

However during testing a number of beneficial concepts were observed and explored with the testers. The use of “Think Out Loud” evaluation and active questioning allowed the continuous self improvement of “Kyoto” and future games by the team. The good components of “Kyoto” raised and ways to improve the game brought up by the play testers were:

- **Good Concept / Story**
- **Beginning of the Game was most Exciting**
- **The player needs a sense of “Ownership” of their cards**
- **Implementation of Competition Game play**
- **Implementation of Teamwork Game play**

Slam Idea Proliferation

During the play-test of “Kyoto” the responses and criticisms were taken into account allowing the creation of a quick prototype for play-testing. Using the same post-it notes a game with the player experience goals of “Competition” and “Teamwork” was the “Slam” prototype was created by Greg Loudon on the spot.

The game “Slam” is all about “slamming” your opponent by playing against them using Environmental “+” cards or Pollution “-“cards until the end of the deck. The game starts with a card being drawn from the deck and continues until the end of the deck of cards by players using their 5 cards to “slam” their opponents.

Turns

The turns of “Slam” are played by each player using a single card against their opponents or themselves to get closest to zero. As the game continues the player accumulates a pile of numbers that are checked after a series of 5 rounds and it would then be recorded.

For example if a player has a stack value of “-9” and has another player play “-3” and they play a “+6” card on their own stack; their score would be “-6”.

End Game

By the end of the entire deck, players would add up their scores and the winner would be the player closest to 0.

Slam Reception

During the play-test by Wing Ying Huang and Yuang Wen, “Slam” was received very well, in which the aspects of “Competition” and “Teamwork” missing from “Kyoto” were implemented and deeply enjoyed. The play-testers both laughed throughout and mentioned the game needed to be “*more complex*”, but we were definitely “*onto something*”.

Kyoto Throw Away and Slam Exploration

After the poor reception of the play-testers to “Kyoto”, it was decided that it should be abandoned and additional card game ideas should be tested. However after the success of “Slam”, it was decided that later on the 12/3/09 during the group meeting the idea would be further tested and explored.

12/3/09

GROUP MEETING

7:30PM – 8:30PM “Brainstorming Ideas” Andrew Chan, Greg Louden, Peter McIntosh & Tim Pettit

As mentioned in the above diary entry after the poor reception of the play-testers to “Kyoto”, it was decided that it should be abandoned and additional card game ideas including the newly designed “Slam” should be brainstormed. Each team member came up with an idea to be evaluated and expanded upon by the group.

Peter McIntosh’s “Inverse Pyramid Tree” Game

The idea by Peter McIntosh was focused upon using branching card tree formations as a new interface paradigm to card games. The idea was that rather than using the traditional 5 card rules of most games, the game would be played by the player creating formations using their cards.

Tim Pettit’s “City Builder” Game

The idea generated by Tim Pettit, was based upon each player building a city using a series of building cards. However the game also featured combat where the player had to attack and defend cards against other player’s attacks. The game was focused heavily upon attack and defense values, and as such was heavily influenced by “Magic the Gathering”

Andrew Chan’s “Fresh Water” Game

Andrew developed a context that each player had to attempt to have as much fresh water as possible through desalination plants and finding natural springs event cards. The game included both “Natural” (Discovering Natural Springs) or “Man-Made” (Desalination Plants) cards.

Greg Louden’s “Slam” Game

The game design of “Slam” during the meeting was further explored after the success of the rapid prototype created during the play-test earlier in the day. After brainstorming and extended evaluation through heuristics and comparisons to other popular games, a range of issues and ideas were raised. Some of the ideas included:

- **Funny Theme** (Silly pictures to evoke the games “Satirical” theme)
- **Personification** (The cards don’t feel as like they belonged to the player)
- **Character not Continents** (“Cluedo” Influence)

Brainstorm Result: “Slam” Success

The result of the brainstorm session was to continue to pursue “Slam” as the card game due to its intuitiveness, simplicity and successful play-test. Peter and Tim’s game designs were both decided to be far too complex for players to “pick-up and

play”. Whereas Andrew’s idea was the next best idea, but after a vote “Slam” won and the development process commenced.

However a key issue of “Slam” was also identified relating to the personification of the game. The cards in “Slam” don’t feel like they belong to the player and as such the game felt awkward despite the fun had while playing. By the next meeting scheduled for the Monday the 16th of March 2009, the team decided to have the issue figured out so art direction and full play-testing can proceed.

16/3/09

GROUP MEETING

4:00PM – 6:00PM “Brainstorming Ideas” Andrew Chan, Peter McIntosh & Tim Pettit

“Slam” Abandonment and More Brainstorming

After discussing the issues of “Slam” related to the inability of players to identify with their cards, the team decided to brain storm another series of game ideas based off the basis of “Slam”. The result of these brainstorms was the creation of “Heatwave”.

“Heatwave” Game Idea

The basic concept of “Heatwave” was to give players the choice to work against or with one another, while playing against the game itself. The game uses two decks, an “Event” and an “Inventory” deck. At the start of the game players would be given five cards from the Inventory deck with an UNFINALISED amount of vitality and health.

“Heatwave” Turns

At the start of each round of the game, a card from the events deck would be taken off the top and turned upside down. The events deck would contain events which would affect players at the end of that round. In most cases it would be a temperature. Players will need to keep cool using their cool down cards from their hands or risk taking damage.

“Heatwave” Cards

The group came up with some ideas of the “Inventory” cards including:

- *Water*
- *Cold Shower*
- *Air Conditioner* (Raises temperature by one)
- *Ice Cream Truck*
- *Grandma Knitted Sweaters* (Heats all players except the dealer)
- *Cold Snap* (Affects all players without a sweater)
- *Spanner* (Stops players from cooling down by throwing a spanner at them)
- *Balaclava* (Allows you to steal another player’s card)

- *Switcheroo* (Allows you to swap a card with a play)

The group also came up with some “Event” cards including:

- *Temperature* (Players will take damage when they are played)
- *Drought* (Players who don’t drink water will be hurt)
- *Samaritan* (Any player that has freely given a player a card, draws a card)

16/3/09

GROUP INSTANT MESSENGER MEETING

9:00PM – 10:00PM “Knowledge Sharing” Greg Louden & Peter McIntosh

After Greg Louden missed the team’s group meeting from 4:00PM until 6:00PM of the same day, Peter McIntosh detailed the teams new design idea. Following Peter’s explanation of the newly designed game to Greg, a number of ideas and key changes to “Heatwave” were explored.

“Heatwave” as a First Person Shooter Card Game

Upon hearing the explanation by Peter, Greg immediately saw the game as a first person shooter. Where the “Events” are the metaphorical enemies and the “Inventory” are the guns of the game. Upon this the concepts of creating a survival core game play mechanic was implemented upon the inventory card as well as being guns would represent each player’s health.

“We want the players to open the funny box... each draw five cards from the first deck and then a dealer plays a card and they have to fight against the weather to survive. If the player cannot fight against the weather they have to discard a card and continue to fight until they have no cards or the events end”

Greg Louden

“Heatwave” Pokémon Cards

Another feature discussed was that each of the “Inventory” and “Event” cards should be easily identified, in which the rules of the game would be displayed on the cards. In this regard the cards of “Heatwave” would be heavily influenced by the simplicity, intuitiveness and format of the Nintendo “Pokémon” cards.

“Heatwave” Event Simplification

The final adjustment made to “Heatwave” was the simplification of the “Event” cards. Rather than have numbers associated to the cards, it was decided that the cards should be simpler. The result after the discussion was to have only four “Event” cards, similar to the four suits of cards of a standard card deck. The result was that the “Inventory” should reflect the four “Events” through containing five subsets of cards. For example the “Umbrella” would be a subset of the “Raining”

event card; where once played the player would be free from the effect of the rain event.

19/3/09

TUTORIAL VARIATION

4:30PM – 6:00PM “Game Design Tutorial” Andrew Chan, Greg Louden, Peter McIntosh & Tim Pettit

At the “Introduction to Game Design” tutorial the group was asked to separate into two groups of two. Upon dividing we were asked to come up with a variation to our game design. The groups were separated with Andrew Chan and Peter McIntosh in one group; and Greg Louden and Tim Pettit in the other. The groups after an hour came back together very different ideas. By the end of the tutorial, one idea from each group would eventually make it into the final design.

Andrew and Peter’s “Vampiricism” Variation

After separating Andrew and Peter came up with the idea of “Vampiricism” inventory card. The “Vampiricism” card allows the player with the card to steal an opponent’s card of their choice and would then put down their “Vampiricism” card into the discard pile.

Greg and Tim’s “Weather Control Machine” Variation

Greg and Tim also coincidentally came up with an inventory card as well. The inventory card that they generated was the “Weather Control Machine”, which was inspired by the “Wild Card” found in the game “Uno”. The “Weather Control Machine” card would allow the player with the card to change the weather (event) card to their choice for a period of two turns. Where the card would play their turn in the turn it is played and one more turn after.

19/3/09

GROUP MEETING

7:30PM – 8:30PM “Heatwave Ideas” Andrew Chan, Greg Louden, Peter McIntosh & Tim Pettit

“Heatwave” Satirical Context

Upon deciding the card game to be developed by the group would be “Heatwave”; the group had a meeting to discuss the art direction and to finalize the “Event” and “Inventory” cards. The overall theme / context of the game would be a hilariously funny global warming game. *“The game would focus upon the irrationality of the weather, and the ways in which people attempt to adapt to this insane weather caused by the global warming.”*

“Heatwave” Cartoon Art Direction

The art direction of the game decided by the group was a family friendly cartoony theme. The cover of the game would be a cartoon reflecting the changes of weather, and a cartoon characters reaction to the changing weather. The key inspiration for the theme was the Nickelodeon shows “Rugrats” and the Fox Television “Family Guy” Stewie character. The following images were the inspiration for the box design. The first image was designed by Andrew Chan, using a series of images to reflect the irrational weather and the cartoon character trying to cope with the crazy weather. Whereas the following pictures were further inspiration and can be found at the listed URL’s.



[http://fc34.deviantart.com/fs12/f/2006/338/4/8/four_seasons_wallpaper_by Dawn42.jpg](http://fc34.deviantart.com/fs12/f/2006/338/4/8/four_seasons_wallpaper_by_Dawn42.jpg)



http://fc20.deviantart.com/fs30/f/2008/090/2/a/4_seasons_by_vxside.jpg

“Heatwave” Card Ideas

During the group meeting the ideas for the “Inventory” and “Event” cards of “Heatwave” were also finalized, so the development and evaluation process of the game could commence. The “Event” cards decided by the group to be designed and to be developed were:

1. *Hot* – Image of the Sun
2. *Rain* – Image of a Raindrop
3. *Snow* – Image of a Snowflake
4. *Blistering* – Image of Evil Face and Mushroom Cloud
5. *Disaster* (All players lose an inventory card)

The “Inventory” cards that were finalized for development by the group were divided into the four “Event” groups and the additional “Special Inventory” group. The art direction and game play mechanics of the “Inventory” cards consisted of:

Special Inventory Cards

1. *Bully Card*
 - **Art Direction:** Big Kid shadowing on top of little kid "Gimme your lunch money!"
 - **Rules and Procedure:** The card allows players to take a card from another players hand
2. *Weather Control Machine*
 - **Art Direction:** A toaster
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Players may select the weather conditions for the next two events
3. *Spanner*
 - **Art Direction:** A spanner
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Spanner interrupts another players move, cancelling its effects and forcing them to play again

4. *Switcheroo*
 - **Art Direction:** A picture of a Kangaroo with a switch attached to its belly
 - **Rules and Procedure:** You may swap a card in your hand with a card in an opponent's hand, or the recent card in play

Hot Event Inventory Cards

1. *Ice Cream*
 - **Art Direction:** Ice cream falling out of a little kids ice cream cone
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Hot" Days
2. *Slip, Slop, Slap*
 - **Art Direction:** Advertisement Logo
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Hot" Days
3. *Shade*
 - **Art Direction:** Tree with sunglasses
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Hot" Days
4. *Sun Baking*
 - **Art Direction:** A pile of ashes on a towel
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Hot" Days

"Blistering" Event Inventory Cards

1. *Pool Party*
 - **Art Direction:** People playing pool in a pool
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Blistering" Days
2. *Hide in freezer*
 - **Art Direction:** Small kid being shoved into a freezer
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Blistering" Days
3. *Holiday in Winter Wonderland*
 - **Art Direction:** Bad clay animation Christmas theme
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Blistering" Days
4. *Sun Baking*
 - **Art Direction:** A kid running into a tidal wave
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Blistering" Days

"Rain" Event Inventory Cards

1. *Umbrella*
 - **Art Direction:** Mary Poppins
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Rainy" Days
2. *Trench coat*
 - **Art Direction:** Trench coat man
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Rainy" Days
3. *Shelter*
 - **Art Direction:** Skyscraper
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against "Rainy" Days
4. *Heater*
 - **Art Direction:** A radiator on fire

- **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against “Rainy” Days
- “Snow” Event Inventory Cards
5. *Thermal Underwear*
 - **Art Direction:** A picture of thermal underwear
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against “Snowy” Days
 6. *Grandma’s Sweater*
 - **Art Direction:** A sweater that is misfit on a person
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against “Snowy” Days
 7. *Holiday on a Tropical Island*
 - **Art Direction:** Little boy and a woman wearing a bikini
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against “Snowy” Days
 8. *Hot Chocolate and Marshmallows*
 - **Art Direction:** A hot chocolate with melted marshmallows
 - **Rules and Procedure:** Protects against “Snowy” Days

20/3/09

GROUP INSTANT MESSENGER MEETING

5:00PM – 7:00PM “Heatwave Art Direction” Greg Louden & Peter McIntosh

“Heatwave” Card Design, Development and Evaluation

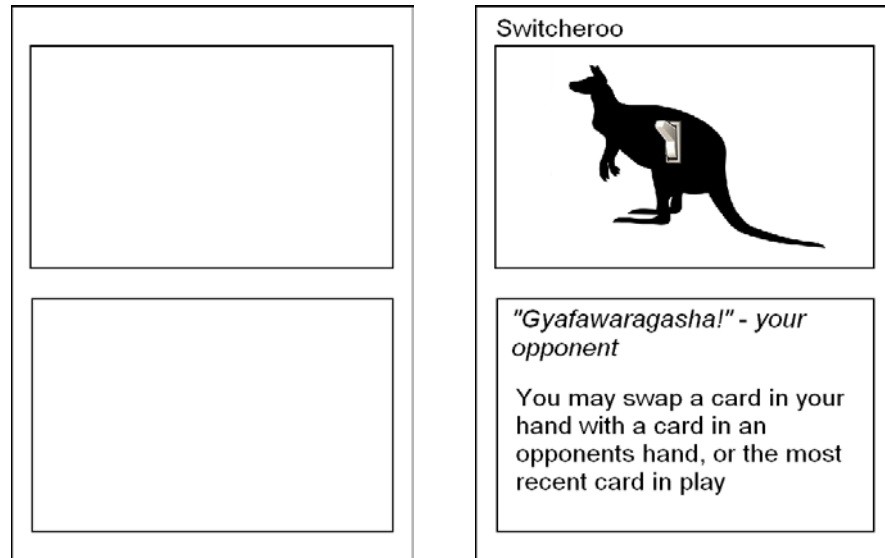
Before the meeting Peter McIntosh started and completed a substantial amount of the art design and production of the cards of “Heatwave”. During the Instant Messenger meeting between Greg and Peter, the art direction of “Heatwave” was evaluated and redesigned. The notes taken during the previous meeting were used a variety of images from different websites were used.

“Heatwave” References

The collaboration between Greg and Peter was achieved through creating an account on the image hosting website <http://www.photobucket.com/> and constant communication using the Instant Messenger service. The pictures were sourced from the image board website <http://www.4chan.org/>. The entire ranges of pictures used were solely found from this website and were found through searching the forums for hours. Upon finding the images, they were often edited to suit the requirements needed for the various “Event” and “Inventory” cards of the game. However a key image was referenced from “Mushroomhead” a band logo for the “Disaster” event card.

“Heatwave” Card Layout

The layout decided by Peter, was to divide the card into two different empty frames. The top frame would house the picture and the bottom frame would contain the rules and procedures of the card. The images below demonstrate the empty frame, and the end result after sourcing an image and using Microsoft Paint to detail the rest of the information required.



Frame Template for “Inventory” Card Design and the completed “Switcheroo” Card

The entire range of both “Inventory” and “Event” cards were created during this session and throughout the focus was upon the player experience goal of the player having fun.

22/3/09

GROUP MEETING

7:30PM – 8:30PM “Heatwave Finalization” Andrew Chan, Greg Loudon & Tim Pettit

“Heatwave” Box Art Slogans

In order to grab the audience, it was decided that a slogan beneath the name would be necessary, rather than just the name itself. The slogan would have to explore the concept of satirizing the “irrationality of weather” as a result of global warming. Ideas included:

- *“It’s Time to Weather the Weather”*
- *“Fight the Weather”*
- *“This is a Global Warning”*

“Heatwave” Design Group Play-Test

After discussing the possible slogans for the game, the game was play-tested using the finalized cards designed and developed by Peter McIntosh. The game was played numerous times, and a number of issues were found. Issues found after the play-test was discussed at length and were resolved through numerous alterations. The issues ranged from balance issues, game play experience goals, to a further name change. The issues and resulting changes will be listed below under a series of headings including the resolution in each paragraph.

Issue #1 Absence of “Decision-Making”

The design team thought the game needed more “Decision-Making” to allow strategies and skills to emerge from the already fun game. The resolution to the issue was to create *Multiple Event Inventory*. The *Multiple Event Inventory* would allow certain traditional “Inventory” cards to have the ability to protect against two events. The multiple event inventory add strategy in that during use and discards, the player would be motivated to keep these over other single event inventory protection cards. The full changes of this alteration to the game would be:

1. **Umbrella** – Protect Against “Rain” and “Sun” rather than just “Rain”
2. **Heater** – Protect Against “Rain” and “Snow” rather than just “Rain”
3. **Pool Party** – Protect Against “Hot” and “Blistering” rather than just “Blistering”

Issue #2 Too Many “Disaster” Cards

After play-testing the game, it was found that there were too many “Disaster” event cards. Throughout the testing process the “Disaster” cards appeared multiple games, and broke the overall flow of the experience. The resolution was to have only 2 “Disaster” cards rather than 4 in the “Event” deck.

Issue #3 Ambiguity of Procedure and Rules of “Special Inventory” Cards

The design team also found that the majority of “Special Inventory” cards procedures and rules were ambiguous. The response was to redefine the procedures and rules displayed on the card, describing the exact procedure used by the player in using the card. For example for the “Spanner” card the card will simply say the “The next player must play twice this round”, rather than the confusing and ambiguous text on the card before.

Issue #4 “The Game was too Short”

Upon playing multiple rounds, the game design group, decided “Heatwave” was too short. The solution to fix this issue was to increase the player’s inventory from 5 to 7. After play-testing more after this change, the game played a lot better and felt more fun due to the increased length.

Issue #5 Name Change

The final issue discovered with “Heatwave” was that the name did not suit the game anymore. The game had transformed significantly since the 16th of March 2009. Hence the game did not reflect a heat wave, and its context had shifted to exploring the satire of the irrational weather caused

by global warming. As such the games name after brainstorming was changed to the final title of:

Wicked Weather:

If all your troubles are melting away watch out for the floods

“Wicked Weather” Box and Manual Design

After the issues of decision-making, balancing, ambiguous procedures and the name change was completed, the team moved onto the box design. The box was decided to have both a front and back cover. The front would contain the defined box art with the new title and slogan underneath. The back of the box was going to contain the title once again, but also a blurb, pictures of some of the playing cards and finally the game design group’s logo.



Game Design Group 5 Logo

Following the box design the agenda for the manual inside the box was discussed. The key points discussed were that the game manual must be simple, accessible and extremely intuitive. Furthermore the game manual would have to develop the story and context of the game, so the key dramatic element of the game could be understood.

Game Design Group 5 Work Allocation

At the end of the group meeting, the roles were allocated and each member would be responsible for completing their allocated work. The final roles of the group following the group “Game Design” was:

Andrew Chan: Box Design and Rules

Greg Loudon: Documentation

Peter McIntosh: Conceptual Design and Physical Development

Tim Pettit: Evaluation and Printing

Evaluation

To evaluate the card game “*Wicked Weather: If all your troubles are melting away watch out for the floods*” the designers did internal and two external play-tests. Internal testing was where the designers played the game with each other to help balancing out the cards and to work out any inconsistencies in the rules. The external play-testing allowed the team to learn what other people thought of the game and to work out which areas needed improvement. During both play-tests, the designers used the set of questions laid out in “*Game Design Workshop: A Play centric Approach to Creating Innovative Games*” by Tracy Fullerton found on Page 264.

Internal tests had the primary purpose of working out issues with the mechanics of the game. The testing involved designing and playing very basic versions of the games to quickly prototype ideas. The process of prototyping is evident throughout the design diary where the designers changed many aspects of the game to help make it a better game to play. An example of this includes the decision to increase the hand size from five cards to seven when the designers found that the game was too short with only five starting cards. Another occasion was the ambiguity issue of the “*Special Inventory*” cards, which was resolved through enhancing the rules and procedures of the game.

The first play test was relatively informal test where the play-testers were a mixture of designers and external players. In this test, the designers used a draft set of cards and verbally explained the rules of the game to the external participants. During the game, the designers took note of how the external players were coping with the game and watching for their response to different aspects of the game such as ease of play and how entertained they appeared to be. Two issues arose during the first play-test, the first being because the team left out explaining one of the rules of the game and the other was because some of the cards had been hand to fix up an issue that the designers discovered before the play test. Overall during the game it appeared that the external players enjoyed playing the game and did not have difficulty seeing what the game would be like once the cards were no longer in draft form.

Following on from the play test the team then asked a series of questions to help evaluate the player’s experience. The major thing that the team discovered was that not all the cards were as funny to other people as they were to them. This was not too much of an issue as overall, the external players found the game to be entertaining, and it is impossible to make every card universally funny. The designers also found that

some of the cards lost their effectiveness because of the monochrome printing instead of full colour printing; this meant that it was hard to see the designs on the cards. Overall, the designers felt that the first play test was successful in finding issues with the game before the final versions of the cards were printed.

The second play test featured a larger group of players and only limited designer involvement. For this test, the team gathered a group of four people and let them play on their own without interference from the designers. The group was brought into a room with the game box, which included the manual and cards and after a brief introduction told to read the rules and play a game. The first thing that the players noted was that they could not read the title on the manual due to the font. The readability issue was resolved quickly through having a quick change of font to render the manual cover readable. The laughter and banter that went on during the game showed that the players were enjoying themselves. However the designers noted that this would have been helped along by the fact that the players knew each other and were therefore able to relate to each other's reactions more easily than a group of strangers who would have been more weary.

After the game, the designers asked the players the same questions as the external players were in the previous play-test. From this, the designers were able to ascertain that having the real cards greatly improved the feel of the game. Not only was it easier to do things such as shuffle the decks but also it was also easier to see the pictures on the cards and thus notice the humorous elements of the game. The other issue was that the designers did not notice during the first play-test was that the players found the rules were a bit ambiguous and difficult to follow. From this information, the designers took the game manual and re-worded the rules so that they explicitly step through the process of playing the game.

From these different forms of testing, the designers were able to improve upon the game "Wicked Weather" so that it gives a better overall experience to the player. The designers found that internal testing was most useful for finding issues with mechanics of the game. External testing was better at showing up problems with physical design (Monochrome cards vs. Full colour cards) and the need to clarify certain aspects of the game (Wording of the rules).

Reflection

After completing “*Wicked Weather: If all your troubles are melting away watch out for the floods*” a card game for Introduction to Computer Game Design, a number of lessons were learnt. The 10 design meeting while extremely successful in game design was unsuccessful in the development of the game overall. The key issues of the project were the focus of the team on design rather than development and finally the teams focus on themselves rather than their players.

The majority of the meetings were focused upon brainstorming new ideas and this often lead to the team continually redesigning rather than developing and play-testing their game designs. For example the team went through 6 designed games during the project time frame. If the team had committed to a single idea, rather than constantly redesigning, the created card game would be of a higher quality through a longer focus on testing rather than on the core game-play mechanics. Thus the solution to the issue of the teams focus on design rather than development would be to commit to a design earlier in the development pipeline.

The designers of group 5 also had the issue of focusing on themselves rather than their players. The end product of the design project “*Wicked Weather: If all your troubles are melting away watch out for the floods*” was a game designed for the team, not necessarily the players. For example the sense of humor of the team is easily represented in the game and the team hopes that the game will be as funny to its players as it is the developers. A lesson learnt though was the mixed results relating to the card game. During testing different players found different cards funnier than others, reflecting that the game is indeed funny, but only extremely funny to a specific niche of players. As such in reflection when designing future games as well as defining the player experience goals, the core target demographic will also be included.

Therefore after completing “*Wicked Weather: If all your troubles are melting away watch out for the floods*” a card game for Introduction to Computer Game Design; the key issues of the project were the focus of the team on design rather than development and finally the teams focus on themselves as players rather than their players.